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From Africa to Europe and the world — passing on what we have received



Francis Folleh CSSp

There was a time — not so long ago — when “going on the missions” meant going to Africa. The sending countries were in Europe or North America, the receivers were in West, Central and East Africa. Times have changed and the Spiritans are changing with the times.

Every eight years (it used to be every six) the Spiritans hold a General Chapter. It used to be held in Paris at the Mother House. Then, over the years, in Brazil, Ireland and Portugal — and this summer in Bagamoyo, Tanzania on the east coast of Africa.

*Our delegate from TransCanada was **Fr Francis Folleh**, Associate Pastor at St. Joseph's Parish, Highland Creek, Ontario.*

On his return from Bagamoyo he sat down with SPIRITAN to talk about his experience.



East and West Africa have received much from Europe. I looked at the recorded deaths of the early missionaries in Bagamoyo: 27, 29, 31 years old — all European. Now, however the missionary movement is from East, Central and West Africa into Europe, North America and elsewhere. Former recipients are now donors; former sending countries are now receivers.

At the Chapter we discussed at length this reverse mission. Much remains to be done in Africa itself, but African Spiritans also feel called to go on mission to the rest of the world. We talked a lot about international solidarity: we have to be ready to help each other wherever personnel are needed.

But that led to a key question: where will we find Spiritans to train those who wish to join us? The large number of young men wishing to become Spiritans makes for a happy situation — but who will lead them through their formation years?

All Spiritan Provinces sent delegates to this year's General Chapter. The larger, newer Provinces spoke of their need for financial assistance — their resources are very limited. Where will they find the finances needed to accommodate and train all those who wish to join them? We discussed this issue at length and in depth. It will be an ongoing topic for the foreseeable future, one that we need to continue working on.

Delegates from older Provinces spoke of a diametrically opposite situation — they are getting smaller and smaller in number and need to merge with neighbouring Provinces so as to stay alive. Nobody wanted to hear a group say, "We are dying out." Amalgamating — yes. Disappearing — no.

Impressive outdoor celebration

Our opening liturgy did not lack for importance. We hosted twenty-two bishops from Tanzania and Zanzibar. Cardinal Pengo of Dar-es-Salaam presided. Many local people attended this





Bishop Shao of Zanzibar re-enacts the arrival of the first Spiritans in East Africa in 1866. They too came by boat from Zanzibar.

very impressive outdoor celebration. They were pleased to have close to 120 visitors from sixty different countries and were very willing to lend helping hands whenever and wherever needed. The local Catholic community in Bagamoyo were particularly generous in their gratitude for all the Spiritans had given them and the Tanzanian people in general.

The Spiritan contribution to education was certainly appreciated: the President of Tanzania and his predecessor voiced their appreciation and requested even more personnel for their schools. A particular request was for Spiritans to empower women — especially in the area of literacy.

Halfway through the Chapter we sailed as a group to the nearby island of Zanzibar, where the Spiritan presence, under the leadership of Bishop Augustine Shao, is greatly appreciated.

A successful Spiritan presence

Bagamoyo itself is “all Spiritan.” The two schools for girls are among the best in Tanzania. Close by is Dar-es-Salaam where the Spiritans have a very important parish. Bagamoyo, of course, was the starting point for the early missionary journeys inland through Tanzania and East Africa. Today’s Spiritans continue to make a big impression among the people, who in turn, volunteer their time and talents to make good things happen.

“Education — a tool of liberation for the poor,”

The newly elected Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Fr John Fogarty, said the missionary order has renewed its emphasis on education as a tool of evangelization and as part of its commitment to empowering the poor. Representatives of the 60 countries, where 2,800 priests, brothers and professed students serve, are negotiating a new global vision for Spiritan education. “We have never had a policy on education so this represents a significant step forward for us,” said Fr Fogarty.

The commitment to education is being driven by its African members, who now make up more than 50% of the Congregation.

They were responding to the fact that many governments in sub-Saharan Africa have asked the church to get involved in education again, as educational standards have dropped since the nationalization of schools following independence from colonial rulers.

The order has had a growing sense that education is a very important aspect of empowering poorer people to take responsibility for their future in society and for shaping their own

societies. This renewed emphasis is a recognition of education as a tool of liberation for the poor.

“Our involvement in education is expanding in Africa in a significant way,” Fr Fogarty said. “In Tanzania we have opened up several new schools in recent years, as well as in

The overwhelming mandate that John Fogarty received on the first ballot is a very positive sign that the future of the Congregation is bright.

— Jeff Duaine, Provincial, US Province

Ghana and Nigeria, where a new university is being built in Ibo land in the southeastern Delta region of the country. The university will offer higher education to those who might not otherwise have an opportunity to obtain it.”

The Spiritans also run education projects for street children, as well as literacy programs in refugee camps. “One of the big challenges for us is that we are so diverse as a Congregation. We have somewhere in the region of 800 students

The whole area gave me a great sense of what a successful Spiritan presence can accomplish, what a difference it can make. Readers of *SPIRITAN*, in particular, are well aware of what has been done and continues to be done among the Maasai people in northern Tanzania.

Highlights of this particular Chapter

- It was so well planned by our host Province
- How united we are as an international group and how that solidarity enables us to achieve what we could never do if that co-operation was absent.
- A big challenge is to equip our Formators with the resources they need to form new Spiritans. Were we to fall down on this core issue we would need to question how serious we are about establishing new missions.
- Another challenge is the fact that some Provinces are struggling to survive due to lack of finances while others are fragile in that they need more leaders.

Fr John Fogarty elected Superior General

The voting to elect a new Superior General and a six-member General Council went smoothly — despite a few voting papers returned unmarked. Our new Superior General is



The newly elected General Council (from left): José de Sousa, General Bursar (not elected, but member of the former General Council, still in office); Alain Mayama, General Councillor; Pierre Jubinville, First General Assistant; José Manuel Sabença, General Councillor; John Fogarty, Superior General; Joseph Shio, General Councillor; Bede Ukwuije, Second General Assistant; Marc Tyrant, General Councillor.

says newly elected Spiritan Superior General

— Sarah MacDonald, Catholic News Service

Jean (-Paul Hoch) hands over the shovel to John (Fogarty) so that the latter can continue the mission of digging out the best in our hearts as Spiritans.

— Chibuike Ojilere, Nigeria

in formation around the world,” the new Superior General said.

The Congregation’s two educational establishments in the United States — Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and Holy Ghost Preparatory School, Bensalem PA — are actively engaged in maintaining their commitment to the Spiritan charism and identity.

“Duquesne is a leader for us worldwide in terms of articulating a strategic plan on how the Spiritan identity can be enhanced and promoted,” said Fr Fogarty. The University is also lending its expertise to Nigerian scholars on the issue of inter-religious dialogue, which was the other major issue stressed at the Spiritan General Chapter.



General Chapter 2012

Fr John Fogarty, chosen on the first ballot. All nine different commissions had opted for him as their first choice to be Moderator of the Chapter. He was the person we needed — his skill as a coordinator impressed all of us. I have no doubt that the Spirit was working among us when we elected him as our leader for the next eight years.

Born in Dublin, he worked for many years in Ghana, then as a member of the Provincial Council in Ireland, the General Council in Rome, and on the staff of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. For the past three years he has been the Provincial

Superior of the USA Spiritans. He knows our current leaders across Africa and is himself a great leader.

Voted in as members of a very international General Council were: Pierre Jubinville (Quebec), Bede Ukwuije (Nigeria), Joseph Sabenca (Portugal), Joseph Shio (Tanzania), Alan Mayama (Congo-Brazzaville), and Marc Tyrant (France).

All the participants were happy that the final results provided them with a young vibrant leadership group for a Spiritan Congregation that is gradually becoming more and more African.

We had very happy evening get-togethers, “sponsored” in turn by each country or region. At the end of daylong meetings from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm the refreshing evening breezes off the Indian Ocean made what could have been a very tiring six weeks much more comfortable and enjoyable.

Hope for the future

I think I could say that we left the General Chapter carrying with us great hope for the future. We had not hesitated to



Gift bearer at the Opening Mass.



Cardinal Pengo, Archbishop of Dar es Salaam, receiving the gifts at the Opening Mass.



Bishop Mkude, Bishop of Morogoro, celebrated Sunday Mass.



Maasai tribesmen came to visit the delegates.

Fr John Fogarty greets his Excellency Dr Jakaya Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.



They came from...



Senegal



Nigeria



Amazonia



Uganda



Great Britain



Quebec



Haiti



Zambia



Australia



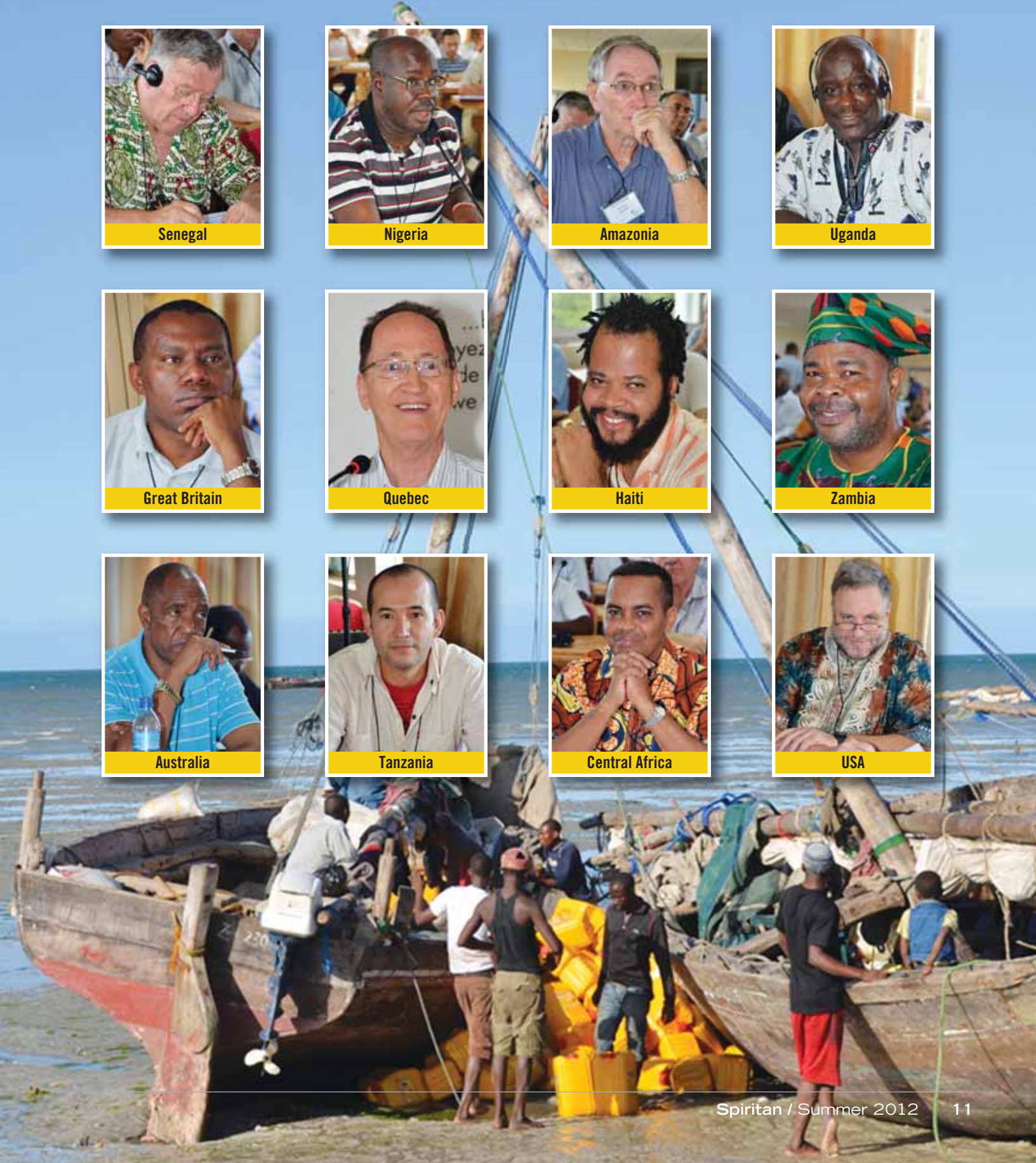
Tanzania



Central Africa



USA



Voting by
secret ballot.



share our thoughts and concerns. Much of what we heard challenged us, but the widespread willingness to “pitch in” ensures that our future will be bright.

Yes, there is room for improvement, but most delegates left Bagamoyo encouraged by what is happening in the Congregation today. Our time together renewed our motivation and our hope. To continue this good beginning we realized that we need to keep in touch with each other about what our various groups are doing. Email makes this so much easier. ■

Tanganyika Territory — fifty years ago

Gerard Tannam CSSp

In 1958 I was appointed to teach history at St. Francis College, Pugu in East Africa. Since the Great War German East Africa was ruled by Britain as part of British East Africa. The British did not spend money on the area, and in the '50s a special effort had to be made to prepare for independence of the Tanganyika Territory. Three schools were chosen to lead the way: one government, one Protestant and one Catholic — St. Francis College, Pugu.

In 1959 all three were moving into “A” level according to the English system of high school, under the Cambridge Examination Board. I benefited, a little, by the whimsy of fate.

St Francis College, Pugu

Back in Pugu I’m not sure how much history was learnt, but it was a memorable experience. Furthermore, even though there was no adequate library near Pugu, even in the capital, Dar-es-Salaam, our students performed well in these early years.

One of the memorable figures of these years was Julius Nyerere, a former teacher at St. Francis, who became the first president of Tanganyika after its independence in 1962. He was an unforgettable leader. Evangelized by the Maryknoll Fathers, he was a credit to them and the Holy Spirit. He would

often bring visitors from Dar-es-Salaam to Pugu and show them the school; for he was then the head of Tanganyika National Union, the independent party of Tanganyika.

Julius Nyerere, a former teacher at St. Francis, became the first president of Tanganyika after its independence in 1962.

There was great trepidation over African history, because of lack of textbooks of any kind for “A Levels”. So off I went to Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda.

This was a remarkable stroke of luck, paid for with government funds. Off I went by railroad and lake steamer to Uganda, witnessing daily life in East Africa at close hand, with some experiences that stay with one a whole life time (not unlike meeting the hero of Vatican II in Rome in 1959, Pope John XXIII).

Among the memorable events of Makerere College were the early Buganda graduates, many of whom were murdered by Idi Amin, dictator of Uganda, in a later chapter of history.

Teaching A Level history was my major concern in Pugu. The African students and their courses were wonderful for me, a naïf Dubliner, but the European history was a shock to the system. Imagine a Dublin man, a supposed civilized person, explaining Uncle Joe Stalin and Uncle Adolf Hitler to African school boys. The mind still boggles!

Those were great years in Pugu, and they were great preparation for the later years in the seminary in Nigeria, the civil war and a final graduation from prison in Port Harcourt in 1970.

As a Dublin friend reminded me on the telephone in 1970, “Gerry, you have graduated at last...”